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# FBI Seeking Ex-Official Who Fled To Ask Him About Spying for Soviets

By Michael J. Sniffen
Associated Press

FBI counterintelligence agents are seeking a former federal official who quit his job in New Mexico and fled after agents began questioning acquaintances about the possibility he had been a Soviet spy, a U.S. official said yesterday.

The source, who asked not to be identified, said the investigation of Edward L. Howard may have been triggered by information from Soviet defector Vitaly Yurchenko.

Yurchenko, reportedly the one-time No. 5 official of the Soviet KGB, defected to the West in Rome in early August. He had served in Washington from 1975 to 1980.

Last week, administration and congressional sources said Yurchenko had named a few former Central Intelligence Agency men as Soviet agents and yesterday two officials put the number at two.

One of the two ex-CIA men implicated by Yurcheno lived in the Southwest, one of the sources said.

Among his government posts, Howard was assigned by the State Department to Moscow in 1983, according to a department document. He also served in the Agency for International Development.

It could not be learned, however, whether Howard was one of the ex-CIA men named by Yurchenko and had simply used his federal agency posts as cover, or whether he came to the FBI's attention through information obtained independently of Yurchenko.

CIA spokeswoman Patty Volz declined comment, as did the FBI's Bill Baker.

In New Mexico, the AP was told that eight FBI agents, backed by a helicopter, converged on Howard's home outside Santa Fe last Saturday. The neighbors said neither Howard nor his wife Mary were at home.

In July 1983, Howard became an economic analyst for the legislative finance committee of the New Mexico legislature. He was engaged in revenue projections and in analysis of the oil industry.

A source in New Mexico, apparently one of several Howard acquaintances and co-workers interviewed last week by the FBI, said he got the impression "based on their questions, that there was some connection between Howard and a KGB defector."

U.S. Attorney William Lutz, in New Mexico, was asked about Howard and said: "I can't comment. We will not comment. We are not going to comment."

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